

CAN MUSEUMS PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALING?
A HEALING MUSEUM MODEL FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

BY

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Abstract

Since colonization, Indigenous peoples and various ethnic groups have endured exploitation, marginalization, and extreme oppression, often culminating in physical and cultural genocide. Crimes of cultural destruction disrupt the fabric of communities; they create a loss of control, sever ties with the past and future, and create feelings of a loss of identity and connection with the value and meaning of culture. This dismissive and destructive behavior by and attitudes of western society towards Indigenous peoples is also reflected in the history of museums. Traditional western museums have misrepresented, objectified, and acted as the authority over Indigenous culture, and so the relationship between museums and Indigenous peoples has historically been one of tension, mistrust, and conflict. However this is changing as museums evolve into agents of social change. Indigenous communities are creating museums and cultural centers to promote cultural connectedness and reaffirm cultural identity, especially after genocide. This thesis will explore how Indigenous communities the importance of healing and oral traditions within Indigenous communities and how these elements can be incorporated into a museum or cultural centers to acknowledge these acts of cultural destruction and to heal the community. I propose that museums are evolving beyond agents of social change so that Indigenous communities can utilize these institutions to acknowledge acts of cultural destruction committed against the people as means of healing. This new museum model incorporates the critical elements of oral traditions and storytelling.

Introduction

This thesis suggests that museums are evolving beyond agents of social change so that Indigenous communities can utilize these institutions as a means of healing from genocide and acts of cultural destruction. To show that museums can aid community healing, I have created a holistic healing museum model which includes the critical elements of oral traditions, storytelling and community. The healing museum model starts from within as it is built directly out of the experience of the community. Its main purpose is not only to display history or culture, but to provide a safe space where the community members can discuss their experiences as a means of healing and celebration of cultural survival. The model is intended to incorporate a healing process that provides a balance on the spiritual, physical and emotional levels.

As a non-Indigenous student in an Indigenous studies program, I need to give an explanation of my position regarding this thesis, as well the reasons I chose the topic and the presentation style of the material. It is critical that intercultural sensitivity play a significant role in the research and delivery of the information and ideas presented in this paper. I do not purport to be an expert in the topic, but instead present the information in such a way that the Indigenous voices are heard and maintained as the experts. I write this thesis from my perspective, molded in western academics, but which has been highly challenged and influenced by the Indigenous professors and students with whom I work.

I am not projecting western thoughts or analysis on Indigenous issues. Instead I am exploring the shifting museum paradigms as the power is placed in the hands of Indigenous peoples and what role this shifting power plays in the context of community healing. The exploration of this topic includes looking at western and Indigenous models and perspectives of the topic.

Current Situation and Research

Colonization is defined by and Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird as:

the formal and informal methods (behavior, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economies) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands, and resources; colonization is detrimental to us [Indigenous Peoples] because the colonizers power comes at the expense of the Indigenous lands, resources, lives, and self-determination and resulted in contemporary daily struggles such as poverty, family violence, chemical dependency, suicide, and the deterioration of health (2).

Colonization is not a single-dated event, but a process that occurred at different times for different Indigenous groups. Navajo chief justice, Robert Yazzie offers the following definition for colonization:

When we are talking about colonialism in the modern world, we are really talking about the conquest and control of nonwhite, non-European people. Colonies and colonialism refers to lands settled by Europeans following the arrival of Columbus in 1492. They include Canada and its Indigenous peoples, the United States, and Indians, Indigenous Australia, Maori Aotearoa, the native Pacific Islands, Indian Latin America and Indigenous Africa (39).

Since colonization, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic groups have endured exploitation, marginalization, and extreme oppression, often culminating in physical and cultural genocide. Crimes of cultural destruction disrupt the fabric of communities; they create a loss of control, sever ties with the past and future, and create feelings of a loss of identity and connection with the value and meaning of culture. Many

elements in western society have long histories that reflect these western attitudes of dismissive and destructive behaviors towards Indigenous Peoples. Museums are merely one western institution in which these attitudes are evident.

Scholar and museum professional Moira Simpson provides the following explanations of western museums and how they acquired Indigenous collections:

The tradition of [Western] museums as institutions both reflecting and serving a cultural elite has been long established and, in many, is still maintained; the museums as a 'cabinet of curiosities' reflected the views and attitudes of dominant cultures, and the material evidence of the colonial achievements of the European cultures (Making Representations 1).

During the colonial era, vast quantities of cultural material were collected and placed in museums leaving many cultures today with little evidence of their cultural heritage. It can now be seen that many objects were obtained through unequal power relations and placed in Western museums (Making Representations 192).

I argue that traditional western museums have misrepresented, objectified, and acted as the authority over Indigenous cultures, and so the relationship between museums and Indigenous peoples has historically been one of tension, mistrust, and conflict.

Simpson reveals that these tensions have arisen "in part due to the nature of the collections and in part to the methods of display" and perpetuated through colonized

"exhibition" and "interpretation" of Indigenous cultures (Making Representations

35). She also states that:

Exhibitions concerning traditional or tribal societies have frequently been criticized for their failure to show them as dynamic, living cultures; rather they portray them as they were seen in the past, thereby giving the impression either that the cultures had vanished, as many Europeans in the late nineteenth century had believed they would, or that their lifestyles persist, unaltered, in the manner of their nineteenth-century ancestors. The nature of collections reflects the attraction and fascination that unfamiliar artifacts held for collectors and their desire to gather material representative of the cultures they

encountered. Within the museum, it was formerly the objective of the curators to try to represent a culture in its pure form with an emphasis upon traditional values and styles, and authentic artifacts and practices. Displays tended to exclude evidence of western influence and modern accoutrements and so perpetuated an image of unchanging societies (Making Representations 35).

Simpson explains that many museums continue to fail in adequately representing the presence and contributions of minority cultures in social history (Making Representations 15). While many anthropologists and museums professionals argue that traditionally:

Museums have come to be seen as hegemonic devices of cultural elites or states and technologies of classification that have helped construct particular ways of categorizing and viewing people, cultures, and things (qtd. in Kreps 2).

Today, “museums are urged to establish on-going dialogue and partnership with Indigenous communities” (qtd. in Kreps 2-3) and “concentrate upon building stronger links with local communities, ensuring that they are relevant and effective in serving the cultural needs of the local community” (Simpson, Making Representations 61).

Indigenous Peoples are increasingly reclaiming power and authority over their cultural heritage; this is evident in the changing relationship between museums and Indigenous Peoples. Anthropologist and museum professional Christina Kreps explains this in further detail:

As these [Indigenous] communities have increasingly begun to demand a greater voice in how their cultures are presented in museums, they have also challenged conventional, museological paradigms of cultural representation and preservation. At issue are the questions of power and authority concerning who has the right to speak for and represent whom (2). One way Indigenous communities are accomplishing this goal is through “the establishment of museums and cultural centers by the communities themselves which

enable them to take full control of their heritage interpretation and provide cultural services of direct relevance to their own communities” (Simpson, Making Representations 69).

Museum professional Nancy J. Fuller argues that “often conventional-style museums were found not to have worked as models for community museums because their social and cultural character was not appropriate for the needs of the audience,” so instead many Indigenous communities are creating their own museums and cultural centers following the ecomuseum model (Fuller 329). For example, by the early 1980s “more than one hundred Native communities in the United States had chosen to established their own museums; approximately fifty had done the same in Canada and Mexico” (Erikson, Ward and Wachendorf 17); “and in 1994, the Smithsonian Institution’s American Indian Museum Studies Program listed over 200” Indigenous museums (qtd. in Simpson, Making Representations 137). Simpson again states that:

The ecomuseum was designed around and within the community in order to combine the natural and social environments, and extend the activities of the museum and the focus of its work beyond the actual museum building and into the community (Making Representations 71).

“Ecomuseums are based on the belief that museums and communities should be related to the whole of life” (Fuller 328). This model creates a “holistic approach to community development and cultural heritage preservation” by interconnecting culture, values, language, environment and the community into a cultural center that celebrates culture and promotes sustainability (Kreps 122). Because the “key concept behind the ecomuseum is creating awareness of the relationships among community,

identity, and space,” for many communities, these cultural centers are instrumental in creating cultural connectedness and reaffirming cultural identity (Kreps 123).

Emerging research in psychology and sociology focuses on trauma healing and recovery as they pertain to social change. This research looks at the healing process within communities that have suffered severe trauma. Indigenous peoples worldwide have been the victims of severe trauma, more specifically genocide.ⁱ Repeated attempts of cultural destruction resulted in consequences and severe aftermath these communities continue to face today such as alcoholism, violence, suicide, poverty, etc. In some of these communities, genocide museums or memorials are erected to remember these devastating events, but more importantly, to empower these communities to mourn the trauma, tell their stories, and remember the history. This empowerment helps re-build the sense of cultural connectedness and identity that is often lost when cultural destruction occurs. This is all part of the community healing process that is critical for the survival and sustainability of current and future generations.

Since the Second World War, and especially in the 1960s and 1980s, there has been an increase in the construction of Holocaust memorials and museums (Whitmarsh 2). Museological research shows that:

The twentieth century saw the development of commemorative traditions: customs and narratives by which individuals, groups, and nations remember, commemorate and attempt to resolve memories of the traumatic experience that is war (Whitmarsh 1).

Clearly, “Holocaust museums and memorials are a related theme” and may serve the purpose of confronting and remembering trauma for the communities that build them (Whitmarsh 1). One psychologist Marta Weston states:

Many nations have created memorials such as monuments, sculptures, museums and days of memory to help people in the process of commemoration and healing. There are now numerous Holocaust museums around the world which honor the victims of the Nazi crimes and help the rest of us never to forget (26).

Genocide museums are one example of museums as agents of social change as they address events that affect many communities. They strive to connect the past with the present and future and educate the public about this atrocious part of human history to prevent future episodes of genocide. These monument and museums spaces as well as “the past, the stories local and global, the present, communities, cultures, languages and social practices—all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope” (Smith 4). Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith further explains that “sheer physical survival is pressing” and that “it is from within these spaces that ...[I]ndigenous academics and researchers have begun to address social issues within the wider framework of self-determination, decolonization, and social justice” (4).

Self-Determination is the main goal of Indigenous Peoples; originally it was the desire of formerly colonized peoples to break free from their European oppressors and take control over their own lives (Deloria and Wildcat 124). The goal of self-determination is still prominent in Indigenous communities, but over time and with social, political and economic changes, the concept of self-determination has evolved

and is now rooted in decolonization theory. These concepts are meant to help Indigenous peoples control their own cultures and communities using methodologies and procedures that are rooted in Indigenous cultures instead of forcing western ideologies on the people. Decolonization and self-determination are used to empower communities. Vine Deloria, Jr. states that “self-determination in the Indian context basically has meant that Indians can administer their own programs in lieu of federal bureaucrats” (24).

Some examples of this include Indigenous language programs and educational facilities, creating Indigenous research methods and increasing the Indigenous representation in academia. Maori language nests provide an immersive language and cultural program for “pre-schoolers” and parents as a way to preserve and revitalize Maori languages and culture (Northwest Territories Literacy Council). It is based on the oral Indigenous values of listening and speaking rather than the western values of reading and writing (Northwest Territories Literacy Council). This model has been used by other Indigenous groups around the world such as the Saami of Scandinavia and Russia and American Indian tribes. Smith provides a culturally appropriate research framework which adheres to Indigenous beliefs and values; this framework is used by many Indigenous scholars and communities when conducting research regarding Indigenous Peoples. There are numerous Tribal universities across the United States that provide a culturally relevant curriculum while conferring advanced degrees for their Indigenous youth. For example, Haskell Indian Nations University is an intertribal university with representation from over 150 tribes

(Rahder). It fuses western academics with American Indian culture in its classroom curriculum.

While the above provide a few illustrations of how Indigenous Peoples are developing programs of self-determination, this thesis explores a newer mechanism through which Indigenous Peoples are accomplishing this goal. I propose that communities are using museums and cultural centers as a vehicle to acknowledge acts of cultural destruction committed against the people and as a forum to tell their stories. Genocide museums represent the idea of museums as agents of social change; they are a means of educating and raising awareness in an attempt to prevent these atrocities from continuing in the future. Confronting social issues reflects current international trends of museums evolving to become more closely linked with the community. Kreps argues that “the new museology movement’s philosophy is primarily concerned with community development and social progress” (9); this is cited directly in the Declaration of Quebec which resulted from discussions within ICOM’s International Committee on Museology (9). Simpson also argues this point stating “activities of new museums go beyond the role of museum and cultural center and deal with issues of social, political and economic importance” (Making Representations 75).

Methodology

This thesis is a qualitative study that will look at how Indigenous communities can use museums to engage in community healing. The first chapter analyzes the theoretical framework of the healing processes unique to Indigenous communities and

the necessary steps these communities must take in order to become a part of the healing process and move forward. This chapter addresses why there is a need for community healing amongst Indigenous peoples, giving brief examples of the trauma genocide causes. The next chapter examines empowerment of Indigenous Peoples through languages and oral histories. These are critical components healing museums can provide that reinforce their cultural survival, sustainability and cultural connectedness. The third chapter discusses a historical overview of the evolution of museums. It is critical to this thesis to define what a museum is today, the current international trends of community museums and the relationship between museums and Indigenous peoples. The final chapter incorporates all these components into creating a model healing museum that communities can follow as a means of engaging in the healing process.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter one discusses the necessary components for healing. Healing is a process that takes time and not simply a one time event that occurs overnight; rather, healing is a continuous cycle with no beginning and no end. Healing from trauma is about acknowledging and validating what happened, giving survivors the space to share their stories with others who have the same experience, and focusing on cultural and community connectedness and identity. Acknowledgement occurs by creating a space to discuss the trauma, recognizing that this happened to the people, and understanding the story from the Indigenous perspective. Validating gives voice to the experience as well as giving others the opportunity to know what happened and

how it has affected the individual and community. These components are empowering as they place the healing process in the hands of the people. This shared history helps bridge culture with community, a connection that may have been weakened during the time of trauma, and which is an integral part of the healing process. Understanding these components leads into the discussion on the importance of oral history in Indigenous communities.

What is history? The German philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel is often considered the founder of history from the philosophical standpoint of the Enlightenment era that history is the story of those regarded as fully human (Smith 32). History is often “produced by academically trained scholars working within the disciplinary perspectives of history, literature, anthropology, and other related fields” (Ruffins 511). Smith explains that the Indigenous “critique of Western history argues that history is a modernist project... assembled around a set of interconnected ideas” (30). She also states that:

History is regarded as being about developments over time. Societies move forward in stages of development. As societies develop, they become less primitive and more civilized. History charts the progress of human endeavor through time. Chronology is important as a method because it allows events to be located at a point in time which makes them “real” or factual. History begins with ‘discovery’, the development of literacy, or the development of a specific social formation. Everything before that time is designated as prehistorical, belonging to the realm of myths and traditions. ‘outside’ the realm (30-31).

In western culture, history is the written chronological account of past events of a period or in the life development of a people, an institution, or a place. Museum scholar Faith Davis Ruffins also defines history as:

What most refer to as 'history' is probably more accurately called 'the past.' By this I mean the enormous body of events and movements, debates and ideas, migrations and discoveries—in short, literally everything that has happened before the present (509).

Smith makes the argument that writing has been used to determine when 'history' began and is seen as a mark of superior civilizations, and Ruffins reiterates that fact that not “everything has become a part of recorded history” (509).

History begins with written texts and so Indigenous “history” before written documents is termed pre-history. The concept of pre-history implies that Indigenous peoples have no history, when in fact Indigenous Peoples have rich oral traditions and “...creation stories that outline the formation of the world, and the place where people are placed on the land as well as their relationship to the land; the creation stories provide many social, political, and cultural institutions which are often upheld and kept through ceremony and tradition as part of the cosmic order” (Champagne 6).

English scholar and oral historian J. Edward Chamberlin argues that:

One of the most debilitating choices that colonialism imposed on us [Indigenous Peoples], is the choice between oral and written traditions, or between oral and written cultures. The fact is that we [Indigenous Peoples] should be deeply uncertain about where to draw the line between oral and written traditions and indeed whether there should be any lines at all (138).

Creating this dichotomy and “separating oral and written traditions into tidy oppositions is like separating the worthy and the worthless” (Chamberlin 139). It's merely another method of suppressing Indigenous Peoples. However, “history is not just something that happened; it is a living part of people's sense of who they are and how they relate to other elements of civil society” (Kreamer 367).

Oral history plays a critical role in many Indigenous cultures. Oral histories connect the past with the present and the future. Indigenous Peoples have relied on oral traditions since before written words as a means of passing down stories, traditions, histories and the culture. Oral histories provide an account of Indigenous history and culture from the Indigenous perspective and are intimately connected with language. Language is an expression of the people and the culture. Indigenous scholar and historian Angela Wilson argues that without language, a culture is dead. Knowledge and culture are passed on through language and oral history.

Cultural trauma and destruction transcend space and time. Present-day and future generations continue to feel the effects of cultural destruction. It is critical to have language and oral history to pass on these stories and experiences in order to help future generations continue to heal from the cultural destruction felt by the community across time. These components provide a way to verbalize the trauma so that future generations don't forget. The younger generations continue to experience the injustices incurred upon their ancestors.

One possible space where these histories can be told and healing can occur is in the Indigenous community cultural centers and museums. However, it is important to realize that museums have not always been spaces where Indigenous voices are heard. This thesis explores how museums began, what their initial purpose was and how they have changed over time. Because this thesis shows how Indigenous communities can and are using museums (community cultural centers) as part of their

healing process, it is necessary to understand how museums have evolved into institutions for social change.

Museums began as treasure troves of private collectors and rulers, institutions that preserved material of the exotic “other” and eventually became public institutions portraying evolutionary hierarchies where conquered peoples were categorized as “sub-human.” Museum professional Jette Sandahl argues that:

Museums in particular became showcases where the color-coded and gender-coded hierarchies of the evolutionary point of view found their material substantiation. New displays, for instance, of the collections of the National Museum of Denmark from the 1840s were organized through the classification of the objects, cultures, and peoples into a three-age evolutionary system of distinct and successive periods that became paradigmatic within museums and within archaeology. Once this system of hierarchy in the development of cultures from the ‘wild peoples’ and ‘those of lower cultural stages’ to ‘those in transition to higher cultures’ was in place, real interest could shift to the ‘information that can be harvested from the ethnographic collections regarding our own prehistory.’ In the thinking of the nineteenth-century philosophy and sciences, primitivity and backwardness became unmistakably associated with the peoples outside Europe (32).

This “scientific” perspective was also projected upon Indigenous cultures so that public museums objectified Indigenous Peoples by placing their material culture behind the glass walls of display cases with little interpretation (Karp; Kreps; Simpson, Making Representations). This practice is a direct result from “the previous single-perspective museum model based on Western values of rationalization and colonialism which presented polarized indigenous and colonial perspectives” (G. MacDonald 43). History reveals that “during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Native American culture was earnestly collected; the assumption was that Native American culture...needed to be preserved before it ran out” (Erikson, Ward

and Wachendorf 16). As one anthropologist suggests, “systematic collecting was not done to amaze or to glorify spiritual truths, but for the purpose of study and research” (Watson 113); museums perpetuated the western desire to control and own Indigenous culture and preserve its ‘physical/material value’ rather than consider the cultural value and spiritual connection (Karp; Kreps; Simpson, Making Representations).

Over time, museums changed to become a means of education. The emphasis on educational programs within a museum setting grew and they became institutions of learning, not just buildings with items and objectified cultures. Museum patrons could learn from objects, instead of just studying objects from afar. Interactive, hands-on activities became instrumental in museums’ missions.

During the 1970s, the ecomuseum model was developed in France. This was a new and innovative approach to museums that incorporated environments, communities, and interactive learning, further changing the focus of museums from buildings with objects to institutions connected to communities and the environment. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States during this time and the increased global awareness of Indigenous and ethnic issues, helped promote the implementation of the ecomuseum model among communities around the world. Anthropologists Ivan Karp and Corrine Kratz state that the Scandinavian countries have also been major players in advancing the ecomuseum model; the ecomuseum model used by these countries has been influential in other areas of Europe, Vietnam, and South Africa (15).

The ecomuseum model fits within the holistic framework of Indigenous communities. Indigenous scholar and historian Donald Fixico effectively describes the meaning of holistic as it pertains to Indigenous cultures:

Indian thinking is seeing things from a perspective emphasizing that circles and cycles are central to the world and that all things are related within the universe. This point of view is a different perspective from that of the American mainstream, based on the Western mind believing in empirical evidence. “Seeing” is visualizing the connection between two or more entities or beings, and trying to understand the relationship between them within the full context of things identified within a culturally based system. This holistic perception is the Indigenous ethos of American Indians and how they understand their environment, the world, and the universe (1-2).

This idea of “holistic” is often symbolized in Native communities by the Medicine Wheel. Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste explains that the “Medicine Wheel illustrates symbolically that all things are interconnected and related, spiritual, complex, and powerful” (xxii).

Indigenous and minority communities began combining the ecomuseum model with presentation of social issues when designing community museums. These innovative museums or cultural centers became centers for cultural celebration, sustainability and revitalization that is similar to the holistic Indigenous method of interconnecting community, environment and culture. During this process, museums evolved into agents of social change. Museums continue to evolve and the future evolution just might include these cultural centers and museums as a vehicle for community healing. Museum consultant Elaine Heumann Gurian states that the “public spaces, especially museums, can be sites of reconciliation between strangers who are wary of, but curious, about each other” (89).

When the public awareness of genocide grew after the Holocaust, international courts of law began implementing ways of dealing with the atrocities and trauma; however, these legal methods dealt with acknowledgement instead of the healing process as a whole. As Wilson argues, “the creation of an Indigenous-initiated truth commission organized and pursued without the help of the colonizing government, would allow the truth of the Indigenous experience to be told and contribute to a state of well-being of the people, promote justice in their lands and facilitate healing” (Indigenous Eyes 190-192). These methods evolved from retribution to reconciliation to truth commissions. The truth commissions opened up a truth-telling forum for victims and perpetrators to share their stories, but did not necessarily focus on healing. However, these legal models of dealing with cultural destruction do not necessarily meet the cultural needs of a community that play a critical role in their healing process. Instead, these models act as “a foreign model ...[and] without testing it and modifying it to fit the needs of the community could cause as many problems as it solves. If it is to truly work for the people, it will have to rise from the people” (Daye 185). This idea of the survivors’ voices and stories as part of the healing process is a major component for community healing.

The mass genocide that occurred between the Hutus and the Tutsi in the early 1990s left scars on the Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda; scars that will always be remembered. Ten years after the genocide, the people of Rwanda erected a genocide museum to remember this bloody history, as a means of acknowledging what happened and to begin the healing process for community survivors.

Through forced assimilation practices, the United States (US) government has repeatedly attempted to destroy the American Indian people and cultures. Boarding schools are one method through which the US government has tried to eradicate Indian cultures, leaving scars on those forced to attend boarding schools and future generations who still feel the effects and consequences of these schools. Haskell Indian Nations University is one of the oldest boarding schools in the United States and the only one to become an intertribal, four-year university. In 2002, the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum was dedicated as a place where former and current students could come to terms with and heal from the atrocities that once plagued the former boarding school.

Memorials and commemorative events are also a method used by Indigenous Peoples for community healing. In 2002, members of 1700 Dakota people participated in the Dakota Commemorative March. This retracing of a 150-mile walk that their ancestors were forced to make in the winter of 1862 is a means for the descendants to further heal and understand this traumatic event in Dakota history (Wilson, Journey of Healing). “Mile by mile, we were physically reclaiming our memory, our spirit and our land” (Wilson, Journey of Healing 263). Wilson continues to explain that “despite the physical and emotional hardship, or maybe because of it, we were taking hold of our past and controlling our history in a powerful, public effort” (Wilson, Journey of Healing 282).

Finally, this thesis presents a healing museum model that Indigenous communities can use in designing a community cultural center that is integral in the

community healing process. It is designed to incorporate Indigenous oral traditions, elements of the healing process and museums as agents of social change.

Chapter 1

“Recovery is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; The survivor recreates the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic capacities for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy” (Weston 7).

Why the Need for Healing?

Genocide is legally defined as:

- 1) killing members, 2) causing serious bodily or mental harm, 3) deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction in whole or in part, 4) imposing measures intended to prevent births, or 5) forcible transferring children from one group to another with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group (Prevent Genocide International).

For centuries, Indigenous peoples have suffered severe trauma that has impacted their social structure, cultural livelihood and communal bond. As one scholar has noted, “Indigenous Peoples worldwide are still undergoing trauma and stress from genocide and the destruction of their lives by colonization. Their stories are often silenced as they are made to endure other atrocities” (Battiste xxii).

Genocide destroys the social fabric of a community and forces Indigenous Peoples to suffer lasting psychological, physical, and destructive cultural effects.

So, what effects does genocide have on communities? Genocide results in trauma that is powerfully detrimental because it does not simply end with those who suffered first-hand but trickles down through the generations and infiltrates the community to disrupt the social fabric. Indigenous psychologist Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart defines historical trauma as the collective emotional and psychological

inquiry both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a cataclysmic history of genocide (qtd. in Ottenbacher). It is the psychological consequence of the violence of genocide; historical trauma has roots embedded in the onset of western contact with Indigenous communities and lasts for generations. One research study found that historical trauma causes a deep breakdown in social functioning that may last for many generations (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski). This is known as intergenerational trauma.

Intergenerational trauma expresses itself in many forms. There is no single response to the trauma, but rather multiple symptoms and social disorders that occur such as alcoholism, abuse, suicide, depression, increased mental and physical health problems, loss of identity and cultural connectedness, social and community disconnect and other psychological, social and spiritual consequences (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski iv). These destructive behaviors or disorders are detrimental to a society which has already had the very essence of its culture attacked; they are known as the trauma response or coping strategies that individuals and communities may engage in as a way to deal with the unresolved grief and anger of the traumatic event. These coping behaviors become cyclical through the generations, causing the recurrence of trauma and loss that never heals. The very nature of genocide created the inability for communities to express their loss/grief in culturally appropriate ways; this denial of appropriate response adds to the socially dysfunctional trauma response (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski).

There are numerous examples of cultural and physical genocide throughout history that target not only Indigenous Peoples, but specific ethnic communities. In the early 1900s, the Turkish government administered a calculated plan of genocide against the Armenians which included deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre and starvation (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski). “It is estimated that one and a half million Armenians perished between 1915 and 1923” (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 62). The next major historical genocide, and possibly the most well remembered, is the Nazi’s mass extermination of the Jews during Hitler’s reign of World War II. Hitler believed that “the Jewish people were a counter-race whose aim was enslave and ultimately destroy the Aryan race...and so the Jewish people had to be exterminated to satisfy this irrational mania” (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 56). Although the “world became conscious about genocide after World War II,” history reveals that genocide continued (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 56).

In the 1970s, Communist leader, Pol Pot, of the Khmer Rouge regime, ordered the mass destruction of over 1.7 million Cambodians (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski). The Cambodians were forced into prison labor camps where most died from starvation, torture or execution (Cambodian Cultural Museum and Killing Fields Memorial). Again in 1994, the world watched in horror as “the Tutsi elite in Rwanda killed off almost an entire population of peasant Hutus” (qtd. in Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 63). What began as an ‘ethnic’ war, the international community later termed genocide. While these are more recent examples of genocide, history

reveals that genocide is deeply rooted in the process of colonization and spans across hundreds of years.

Australian colonization in 1788 began centuries of human rights violations against the Aborigines. Up until the end of the twentieth century, Australian Aborigines suffered loss of land, political autonomy, self-determination, cultural erosion and the stolen generations (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski). Well into the 1980s, the Australian government practiced the forceful removal of children from their families [and communities]; a genocidal practice intended to destroy Aboriginal social and cultural identity (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 61). These children are the stolen generations. These violations jeopardized the survival of Aboriginal culture, thus constituting cultural genocide in Australia. For decades, Indigenous children of North America, Australia, and Scandinavia were forced to attend boarding schools in order to impose colonizing ideologies, education, religion and beliefs on them (Rasmus). Boarding schools attempted to “civilize the savage” which is simply a form of cultural genocide.

By no means do these examples encompass all genocidal accounts in history, but merely a few mentioned to show that genocide touches all parts of the globe, even in the present-day. While genocide is considered one of the most heinous acts of violence against humanity it continues to occur on multiple levels and in various forms. Genocide destroys entire peoples and cultures, traumatizes individuals as well as entire communities, and crosses generations. One Indigenous personal experience describes genocide as the following:

[I know] that genocide remains the most perverse human act. It eradicates entire people. It annihilates whole cultures. It rips beauty, wisdom, and understanding from the world and robs a people of its identity (Horn 75).

Healing from this mass trauma requires a process that can attempt to heal the “individual” parts as well as the “community” whole. Healing itself is a complex process, but when discussed within the context of genocide, we must recognize its multi-layer complexity—individual, community, and trans-generational (Bison; Brahm).

History shows that there have been attempts to reconcile and deal with perpetrators of genocide. According to Reconciliation Australia, reconciliation is defined as:

involving justice, recognition and healing; it’s about helping all Australians [Indigenous peoples] move forward with a better understanding of the past and how the past affects the lives of Indigenous peoples today.

Psychologists Staub, Pearlman, Gubin and Hagengimana define reconciliation as:

mutual acceptance by members of formerly hostile groups of each other. Such acceptance includes positive attitudes, but also positive actions that express them, as circumstances allow and require. Reconciliation must include a changed psychological orientation toward the other (301).

These definitions provide a framework for understanding how reconciliation is merely one part of the healing process. Some examples of reconciliation in a court of law include the Nuremburg Trials, Truth Commissions and tribunals. Seeking justice and punishing those who are responsible for such atrocities no doubt helps to aid reconciling perpetrators and victims. Justice is also one part of the healing process. According to Pearlman and Staub “healing is promoted by the feeling that justice, as defined by the individual, community, and society, has been or will be done” (par.

11). Therefore, the victims should have a decision in what constitutes justice. While Truth Commissions can provide trauma healing, acknowledgement and validation, they cannot provide the long-term support that is most required for trauma healing (Brahm). Bringing perpetrators to justice does not fully deal with the lasting psychological, spiritual, physical and emotional damage to the community and its individuals.

Psychologist Marta Weston conducted research on healing from ethnic conflict and found that “survivors of ethnic violence may feel a strong urge for retribution against perpetrators, but most of all they want a public acknowledgement of the crimes” (23). One study reveals that “recent historical inquiry into an ugly past has generated the need for several apologies from the framework of human rights and civil society” (Nytagodien and Neal 466). Some governments in Australia and Canada have offered national apologies to the Indigenous Peoples for past historical atrocities. On May 26, 1998, Australia announced the first National Sorry Day (Australia Government). This is the day recognizing the government’s atrocious behavior regarding the stolen generations and its negative effects on Aboriginal culture and livelihood. In 2005, the National Sorry Day committee officially renamed Sorry Day as the National Day of Healing for all Australians, stating “the day is to focus on healing as needed throughout Australia if we are to achieve reconciliation” (Australia Government). This act acknowledged this traumatic history and gave credibility to the victims’ losses, trauma and social displacement. While the

committee's public apology to the people acknowledgement of wrong-doings is one step further on the path of Indigenous healing, Wilson argues that:

Perhaps a complete healing can only occur with the perpetrators' contrition and even acts of reparation but that Indigenous peoples can begin to facilitate their own healing independent of an acknowledgement from the perpetrators (Relieving Our Suffering 194).

Genocide, or "massive violence, affects both individuals who have suffered trauma and the community in which these events occurred" (Ajdukovic 121).

Therefore, communities must address trauma healing on multiple levels within their communities. Pearlman and Staub again argue that:

Healing is essential to prevent future violence. Children of victims and perpetrators are affected by violence, even if they weren't born when it took place as parents can't help but carry their unhealed injuries into the next generation (par. 3).

Without healing, it is possible for a community and individual members to pass on the memory and pain of a traumatic event to future generations. This could become part of the collective memory resulting in intergenerational trauma. "Trauma and grief that have not been resolved within the Aboriginal psyche become deeply embedded in the collective memory of Aboriginal Peoples. This perpetuates the problem and the socially dysfunctional behaviors that are symptomatic of the trauma. Healing must occur if the community wants to repair the cultural trauma and move forward; as stated by the Waywayseecappo tribe in Canada, "healing is processing and moving beyond hurt; it is anything that helps people become more unified and more able to be well and prosper" (Lane et al. 38).

These intergenerational consequences of genocide emphasize why Indigenous communities must engage in healing for the sustainable future of their culture.

Gutlove and Thompson further argue “the growing awareness of the effects of traumatic events on groups, communities and societies has created a new acceptance of the need for social healing” (136). This chapter explores the healing process and the elements that research indicates are instrumental in healing a community. It is critical to understand that healing is not merely a single process but rather a complex and abstract process that differs between communities and across continents. Healing reflects the culture, thus concentrating on the values, beliefs and customary practices of the people. “Healing is a developmental process aimed at achieving balance within oneself, within human relationships and between human beings and the natural and spiritual world” (Lane et al. 44). Research shows that “healing within Aboriginal communities focuses on well-being and moving the population towards wholeness and balance” (Lane et al. 44). It incorporates priorities of the culture such as cultural identity, family, community, oral traditions, elders, etc. According to one study the Indigenous Peoples should use a healing model that reflects knowledge and traditional values of balance, inter-connectedness, intra-connectedness and transcendence (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski iii). This model should also address the needs of the community as a whole as its individuals begin to heal.

When thinking about communities’ needs to heal and move forward, it is vital to focus on the positive rather than negative. It is important to consider the terminology with which we refer to victims of genocide. Language and words have

powerful connotations that impact people's response to their meaning. For example, referring to "survivors" as such instead of "victims" is more empowering and positive. According to the Takini Networkⁱⁱ, "using the term victim defines the individuals in terms of the trauma whereas using the term survivor transcends the trauma and allows the community to move forward in the healing process" (qtd. in Bison 5). Indigenous Peoples are more than "victims" of genocide and intergenerational trauma (Bison 1). The term victim implies a weak and breaking social structure of a community that was wiped out by a stronger force. However, referring to those targeted for genocide as survivors suggests the strength and endurance of a people; a community that was wrongly attacked and persecuted for its cultural/ethnic affiliation. Focusing on the strength of a community is more conducive to engaging successfully in the healing process.

What is Trauma Healing?

As previously stated healing is a complex and abstract process which makes it difficult to define. How does one truly define healing and determine at what point it has been achieved? Gutlove and Thompson explain that "psychosocial healing is a process to promote psychosocial and social health for individuals, families, and community groups" (137). Healing occurs at different rates specific to the individuals and communities. Therefore, there is not simply one healing model but multiple models of healing that incorporate various components critical to different communities; it offers a mechanism through which individuals and communities may deal with trauma and move forward in life. One study defines healing as:

moving beyond hurt, pain, disease, and dysfunction to establishing new patterns of living that produce sustainable well-being (Lane et al. 12).

This study discusses multiple definitions of healing. The purpose of citing multiple examples is to show that there is not one single definition of healing but rather it is a fluid concept that changes as necessary to meet the needs of the community. The following are definitions from this study that fit within the healing framework suggested in this thesis:

Healing may therefore be strategically described as a process of removing barriers and building the capacity of people and communities to address the determinants of health (Lane et al. 12).

Culture, identity, tradition, values, spirituality, healing, transformation, revitalization, self-determination, self-government: a spiral of ideas and actions constitute community healing. At the most basic level, when Aboriginal people speak of community healing they suggest that there are many individuals within their community who must heal themselves before they will be capable of contributing to the many tasks that lie ahead. They talk of finding ways to help support individuals who must heal deep wounds. This can only be accomplished if people are provided with opportunities for spiritual growth and cultural awareness. More generally, people must acquire new skills so that the capacity of their communities to engage in discussion, planning and control over their institutions is increased. There is a need to build supportive and healthy environments so that debate and dialogue can be conducted on the many complex issues that comprise self-government (qtd. in Lane et al. 19-20).

Gutlove and Thompson further suggest that the goal of trauma healing is to acknowledge and integrate the traumatic experience to mourn the old self that the trauma destroyed and create a new self with new beliefs and new meanings (137).

So, how does a community begin to heal? Gutlove and Thompson state:

Healing cannot occur in isolation because it is necessary to heal the psychological faculties that were damaged by the trauma, and this healing can only occur in connection with other people. Healing societal trauma involves

the development of support groups that employ a facilitated process whereby individuals heal in the context of a group (142).

As psychologist Ajdukovic states, “communities destroyed by violence need a community approach” (125). Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart also suggests that grief resolution through collective mourning/healing creates a positive group identity and commitment to community (qtd. in Ottenbacher). Effective community-based interventions should facilitate psychosocial reconstruction of the communities, decrease social tensions among groups involved in the conflict, provide treatment for individuals and work towards re-connecting community members (Ajdukovic 125).

Psychological research indicates that the healing process may be made up of distinct phases. Psychologist Judith Herman proposes one model of healing designed around three main stages: establishment of safety, remembrance and mourning/acknowledgement, and reconnecting with ordinary life (Weston 8; Gutlove and Thompson 142). Ajdukovic incorporates these three processes to design his model of community social reconstruction. His model is made up of the three parallel processes of recovery from losses, violence, and trauma, establishing social norms and tolerance, and empowerment (Ajdukovic 129-131). In 1992, the Takini Network developed an intervention plan to heal historic trauma; this healing model has four parts: 1) confront the trauma and embrace the history, 2) understand the trauma, 3) release the pain, 4) transcend the trauma (qtd. in Bison 5). These various models further illustrate that healing is not a single defined process, and therefore it could be argued that all of these elements are critical in the community healing process.

Gutlove and Thompson clearly state that “the need for safety underlies all other aspects of the healing process” (142). As most researchers and practitioners state within the field of trauma healing one of the first critical elements of promoting trauma healing to create a place of safety (Lane et al. 20). In this space, survivors can “re-establish normal human relationships and engage in a general atmosphere of communal healing” (Weston 8). For example, some Aboriginal communities have established “healing centers” or “culturally based wilderness camps” where community members can engage in traditional healing methods such as ceremonies, sweating, traditional arts, story telling, and community connectedness (Lane et al.). According to psychologist Cathie Witty “...people need a safe space to explore, ask questions that are not asked in normal discourse, and speak the unspoken” (53). This leads into the next critical factor in the healing process: story-telling.

So, can museums be a vehicle to facilitate healing? Yes. Museums and cultural centers designed by the recovering communities fulfill the first step of healing: providing a safe place where survivors can share their experiences; this leads to acknowledging what happened through oral history and oral tradition. The next chapter discusses how oral traditions and oral histories are critical elements of Indigenous cultures and an important aspect of the healing process.

Chapter 2

As asserted above, history, defined in the western context, is the chronological account of past events of a period or in the life development of a people, an institution, or a place. This linear perspective of history differs from how Indigenous peoples use oral traditions as historical contexts. Wilson makes the distinction that “these stories are so much more than the written documents by non-Indians; they are transmissions of culture upon which our survival depends” (Remember This 111).

According to Fixico:

The story is enlivened such that the past becomes part of the present, and the past and present is projected into the future. All three parts of linear time—past, present, and future—are part of the American Indian circular understanding of a time continuum (27).

Angela Wilson also explores this difference in “historical” perspectives by asserting that:

The Native connection to oral traditions is drastically different from how the American populace connects with their historical texts. Our stories have served and continue to serve very important functions: both historical and mythical stories provide moral guidelines by which one should live; they teach the young and remind the old what appropriate and inappropriate behavior consists of in our cultures; they provide a sense of identity and belonging, situating community members within their lineage and establishing their relationship to the rest of the natural world; and they always serve as a source of entertainment, as well as a source of bonding and intimacy between the storyteller and the audience. These stories provide detailed descriptions about our historical players—information such as our motivations, our kinds of decision-making processes—as well as about how non-material, non-physical circumstances, or those things belonging to the unseen or spirit world, have shaped our past and our understanding of the present (Remember This 35-36).

Therefore, oral traditions provide a much deeper, internal community connection which blurs the lines between history, community and culture.

Chamberlin explores this idea of blurring the lines between written and oral cultures explaining that these ideas are birthed directly out of colonial theory and in fact “we should be deeply uncertain about where to draw the line between oral and written traditions and indeed about whether there should be any lines at all” (138).

Colonial theory leaves little if any room for Indigenous worldviews to fit within western concepts. Battiste argues instead that we must think about Indigenous societies and concepts using postcolonial methods:

Indigenous thinkers use the term ‘postcolonial’ to describe a symbolic strategy for shaping a desirable future, not an existing reality. The term is an aspirational practice, goal, or idea that the delegates used to imagine a new form of society that they desired to create. We acknowledge the colonial mentality and structures that still exist in all societies and nations and the neocolonial tendencies that resist decolonization in the contemporary world. Such structures and tendencies can only be resisted and healed by reliance on Indigenous knowledge and its imaginative processes. Postcolonial Indigenous thought emerges from the inability of Eurocentric theory to deal with the complexities of colonialism and its assumptions. Post-colonial Indigenous thought is based on our pain and our experiences, and it refuses to allow others to appropriate this pain and these experiences. It rejects the use of any Eurocentric theory or its categories (xix).

What Battiste suggests about postcolonial or Indigenous thought is directly related to oral traditions and oral histories. Battiste states that healing from colonial structures occurs with reliance on Indigenous knowledge. This chapter, discusses how oral traditions/histories and their place within Indigenous cultures are an important part of healing trauma endured by Indigenous communities.

Indigenous communities originating from a strong oral tradition continue to emphasize the central role oral traditions play in the continuation and future survival of that culture. Oral traditions are often compared against western standards of historical accounts and thus labeled “myths” or “stories” that simply provide an Indigenous perspective with no real “historical” value. Paralleling oral history to terms associated with tales of fiction fantasy further perpetuates the belief that oral history is equivalent to no history. Indigenous Peoples “[we] have been trained by the dominant society to think of our stories and language as insignificant or even worthless,” thus devaluing the importance and credibility of oral history and its relevance to a culture (Wilson, Remember This 13). This perspective results from a lack of understanding and the dominating notion of western methods as superior to Indigenous methodology.

As previously stated, Indigenous cultures are long rooted in oral traditions that have been instrumental in passing down the culture, language, customs, beliefs and many other aspects of the people’s livelihood. Oral history differs from oral traditions. According to Wilson:

Oral history is contained within that of the oral tradition. Oral tradition refers to the way in which information has been passed on rather than to the length of time something has been told. Hence, personal experiences, pieces of information, events, incidents, etc can become part of the oral tradition at the moment they happen, or the moment they are spoken of, as long as the person adopting the memory is part of an oral tradition. Oral history can also exist outside the oral tradition since many individuals may provide authoritative oral-historical accounts based on their own experiences without necessarily belonging to an oral tradition themselves (27).

While Wilson states that this definition is from her Dakota perspective, she does suggest that a similar definition could be used by other Indigenous Peoples. This definition suggests the empowerment of the people and community connection as a culture, language, history, and traditions are passed on through the generations. This differs from the definitions provided by historians David Hanige and Jan Vansina.

Hanige stated:

Oral history refers to the study of the recent past by means of life histories or personal recollections, where informants speak about their own experiences...oral tradition should be handed down for at least a few generations (qtd. in Wilson, Power of Spoken Word 102).

Vansina offers the following definition:

The sources of oral historians are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants. This differs from the oral traditions in that oral traditions are no longer contemporary. They have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants (qtd. in Wilson, Power of Spoken Word 102-103).

While all three definitions provide a distinction between oral traditions and oral histories, Wilson states that the historians' definitions are "derogatory in nature, but could be applicable to Indigenous oral history and oral tradition in a limited way" (Wilson, Power of Spoken Word 103). The non-Indigenous definitions appear to display a lack of understanding of the origins and value systems of Indigenous communities.

Oral stories are transmissions of culture upon which Indigenous Peoples' survival depend (Wilson, Remember This 36). Oral history is directly tied to Indigenous language. It is through the Indigenous language that oral traditions and

history are passed down to future generations. It is important to understand that certain concepts, ideas and ways of thinking are only understood within the language in which they were created because language is an important component in shaping our worldviews which directly reflects cultural beliefs (Chamberlin; Wilson). Some things cannot easily be translated because of language barriers and cultural differences in concepts. Even certain terminology cannot be translated as there is no word directly comparable. Passing on oral traditions and history in translated versions can and will cause a loss of information and understanding. The survival of a culture is directly connected to oral traditions and tied to the particular Indigenous language of a community because “language is linked to systems of thought, which are linked to history and to identity” (Wilson, Remember This 51).

Oral traditions are directly tied to language. Language is empowering. Language makes things happen; it creates feelings and brings things into being (Chamberlin 125). Colonialism as a theoretical framework establishes a frame of reference for which we think about language. This framework is centered in dominant society around concepts and ideas determined by the colonial powers. It establishes an authority and challenges us to believe it (Chamberlin 125). This implied or imposed authority discourages the use of Indigenous languages, especially of communities based on oral traditions to practice these traditions in their mother tongue. “If our words and our several modes of imaginative representation are replaced by others that are not the reflection of our hearts and minds and experiences and the heritage of our people, then so is our reality” (Chamberlin 127). Using

western languages to describe Indigenous concepts and writing Indigenous histories transforms the reality of the people as “the entire way of life, language and land is redefined in the colonizer’s language” (Wilson, Remember This 61). Many Indigenous communities are at risk of losing their languages (Wilson, Remember This 52).

Colonization has had detrimental effects on the survival of Indigenous languages. This began with the missionary attempts at utilizing Indigenous languages to convert Native people to Christianity and continued with the punishment of boarding school children for speaking their Native tongue instead of English (Wilson, Remember This 53). Wilson argues that “language loss has become the most pressing cultural issue facing Indigenous Peoples in the twenty-first century” (Wilson, Remember This 52). As Indigenous languages die out, worldviews and vital cultural information is lost forever (Wilson, Remember This 52). One example is illustrated in some communities in the Kola Sámi of Russia, where “it is impossible to find a native speaking teacher to teach the younger generations” (Lehtola 69). Of the three Kildin Sámi languages spoken in the Kola Peninsula, “two have completely disappeared” (Lehtola 68).

Oral traditions are necessary today for the continuing survival of Indigenous cultures, history and language. Oral history ties individuals to the community (past and present), the peoples’ history, future and culture; it acts as a crucial factor in maintaining and establishing cultural identity. “The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with

the people and the people with the story” (Smith 145). In fact, even in the academic field of history, more researchers are using oral history as a valid research source and an increasing number of books are written regarding this topic. Storytelling lends itself to the collective memory of the community, combining personal experiences into the experience of the whole. Oral traditions bring together the parts with the whole in order to create the holistic connection rooted in the foundation of Indigenous communities. “Words of power and words of survival have one thing in common. We remember them. It’s also how they contribute to our individual and collective survival” (Chamberlin 125).

One anthropologist argues that, “collective memory refers to a set of memories held in common by a group of people” (Erikson, Ward, Wachendorf 26). Each member of an oral tradition adds to the collective memory as personal stories and experiences are incorporated into the oral traditions passed down. Wilson refers to this phenomenon in her previously stated defining of oral tradition and oral history. This process is also an important component in ensuring the survival of the people. “In building a collective voice, as Indigenous peoples we derive great strength from hearing words of truth spoken: truth is an ally of the oppressed” (Wilson, Remember This 13). “Words of power and words of survival have one thing in common. We remember them. It’s also how they contribute to our individual and collective survival” (Chamberlin 125). Too often the “history” reflects the colonizers perspective on events. The process of collective memory gives Indigenous survivors

the opportunity to remember and tell their truth of the history. The collective memory gives strength as it becomes the memory of a people.

The importance and validity of oral history and oral traditions is gaining increased awareness in academia. This movement is promoted by Indigenous scholars who are challenging the western paradigm of research and increasing the research field to include methodologies that more accurately reflect Indigenous worldviews, frameworks and paradigms. In Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, Smith discusses twenty-five projects in which Indigenous communities are engaged in research of their people, some in collaboration with non-Indigenous researchers and/or organizations. Several of these projects pertain directly to oral history and healing of communities dealing with historical trauma as this is an important element in Indigenous research. Because oral tradition is such a critical aspect of Indigenous culture, Indigenous projects are using oral history as a main tool in the research process. The following are specific examples illustrating the importance of oral narratives in researching Indigenous communities.

One research project focuses on *testimonies* of Indigenous Peoples. Smith states that:

A testimony is also a form through which the voice of a 'witness' is accorded space and protection. Indigenous testimonies are a way of talking about an extremely painful event or series of events...with a formality and notion that truth is being revealed and...within a structure where events can be related and feelings expressed (144).

Smith continues to argue that *story-telling* as research:

Is a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the 'diversities of truth' within which the story-teller rather than the researcher retains control.

The Indigenous community becomes a story that is a collection of individual stories, ever unfolding through the lives of the people who share the life of that community (145).

Testimonies and story-telling (including both the elements of the story and the story teller) are important means of “connecting the past with the future, one generation with the next and the people and land to the story” (Smith 145).

Indigenous orator and writer, Lee Maracle, states that “story is the most persuasive and sensible way to present the accumulated thoughts and values of a people” (87).

Testimonies provide the multiple truths that come together into the story and become part of the collective consciousness; they provide the first person perspective on the experience. Each community member has a place in the collective consciousness as each story is a part of the collective story or history (Smith 144).

Another research method Smith describes is *celebrating survival*:

Cultural survival accentuates not so much our demise but the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have successfully retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity. This approach is reflected in story form, sometimes in popular music and sometimes as an event in which artists and story tellers come together to celebrate collectively a sense of life and diversity and connectedness. Cultural survival is also a theme that runs through the collections of elders’ stories (Smith 145).

This research method is increasingly used by Indigenous writers, artists, and Indigenous community members. This form of cultural expression is important as it provides another means of releasing feelings and telling a story. As stated previously, translating language is problematic when translated as certain cultural concepts that do not always exist outside of their mother language. Celebrating survival through the arts helps maintain the individual’s connection to his/her culture as it gives life to

the individual's experience, and the traditional cultural art forms that continue to thrive in the present-day.

Finally, Smith describes *remembering* as research:

Remembering relates to the remembering of a painful past and, importantly, people's responses to that pain. This form of remembering is painful because it involves remembering not just what colonization was about but what being dehumanized meant for our own cultural practices. Both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously forgotten (146).

Celebrating survival and remembering are directly related to the healing museum model. The painful history of a people becomes a part of the present and future.

History transcends generations and becomes an important component in shaping the future of the people and culture. These two research methodologies go hand-in-hand when discussing genocide and trauma as they become important components in the healing museum.

Indigenous scholars and community members recognize that using research methods designed around oral history, such as those mentioned above, provides an inclusive rather than exclusive approach within Indigenous communities. The methodological frameworks of these research strategies are better representative of the Indigenous beliefs, values and cultural framework; it is important to use Indigenous frameworks when conducting research within Indigenous communities. Indigenous models of research can create a more positive response from the community members and a willingness to participate as the individuals are more

likely to understand the purpose and the value of this research and how it will contribute to the survival of the culture.

The research projects mentioned are also instrumental in showing the link between oral traditions and collective or community memory. These methods bring together many “truths” or “experiences” into one collective remembering. The presentation of history from a western perspective gives the impression that there is only one truth, and usually the truth is that of the colonial power writing the history. Other “truths” are typically presented as biased. However, there are many experiences for each single event, thus giving multiple truths from a variety of perspectives. The importance of Indigenous collective remembering is that it is the culmination of all these truths into one. Each voice is heard; each voice is important and contributes to the whole. Indigenous communities not only feel the oral history of the community is important, but also give validity to the oral histories of the individuals.

Chapter 3

Museological theory and history are deeply rooted in colonial processes. “A museum is a process as well as a structure; it is a creative agency as well as a contested terrain” (qtd. in Macdonald 4). “Like anthropology and sociology, museums are products of modernity and their development is deeply implicated in the formation of the modern nation-state” (Macdonald 7). Bennett also states that:

Moreover, the conflict between the theoretical universalism of the museum’s discursive space and its actual articulation to existing social hierarchies has been, and continues to be responsible for fuelling a politicization of the museum as it has been called on to reverse these exclusionary and hierarchical effects (46).

The historical functions of museums reflect the imbalance in power relations between Indigenous populations and the colonizers. The European museum model catered to the cultural elite, those who were in power, the socially affluent. The political controversies and power relations of museums are now being challenged and changed, causing paradigm shifts as many museums are evolving into community-centered museums. At the same time, Indigenous communities are creating their own museums and cultural centers.

Indigenous communities use these museums and cultural centers as places to interpret their own culture using items returned to the tribes through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and other repatriation efforts. In 1990, the United States Congress passed NAGPRA which required museums to inventory their human remains and ceremonial artifacts to federally recognized tribes (Marstine; Simpson, Making Representations; Kreps). Museums

continue to inventory their ethnographic collections and work with tribal NAGPRA representatives in order to identify items of sacred/ceremonial and cultural patrimony importance.

“Museums are changing in many ways: their image as dusty, stuffy, boring and intimidating storehouses is slowly giving way to recognition that museums can be authoritative without being definitive; inclusive rather than exclusive; exciting, lively and entertaining while still being both scholarly and educational” (Simpson, Making Representations 5). “Museums are undergoing radical change in the way they function and in their relationships with the cultures represented in the collections” (Simpson, Making Representations 1). According to Indigenous scholar James Riding In, museum attitudes have changed somewhat as a result of Indigenous resistance to the abusive treatment of their dead and cultural material and their call for justice which resulted in NAGPRA (53).

How have museums evolved from treasure troves to agents of social change and why? This will help ground our working knowledge and definition of museums in 2007. We need to redefine the colonial concept as it pertains to Indigenous Peoples and Indigenize the museum. First we will explore the relationship between museums and Indigenous communities.

History of Museums

The concept and philosophy of museums have changed dramatically over the period of their development (Simpson, Making Representations 108). While museums have not always served the same purpose and functions, the museum

concept is at once very ancient and very new. The term ‘museum’ is a Latin derivative of the Greek term ‘mouseion’ (Alexander 6). Perhaps the oldest sense of “museum” refers to the Pythagorean temple of the muses, a “sylvan grove to which scholars repaired, there to conduct research, amid discourse, and with reference to books or objects (Hein 3). The muses were goddesses who watched over the welfare of the epic, music, love, poetry, oratory, history, tragedy, comedy, the dance, and astronomy (Alexander 6); instrumental keepers of all aspects of culture. These temples served as sacred places for cultural objects, ideas and traditions. They belonged to the elite, wealthy rulers who coveted fine items and created their own spaces of protection to preserve them.

Most early museums began as the result of private collections, collections acquired during political conquests, cultural treasures, or simply the desire to own beautiful and exotic objects of cultures and lands unknown. They began as private storehouses, or “treasure troves” for these collections. These institutions reflected the political power of kings, monarchs, and conquerors. This practice dates back to ancient civilizations across the globe:

The ancient civilizations, whether Middle Eastern, African, Oriental, pre-Columbian American, Greek or Roman, placed their finest productions in temple or palace treasuries. Even during the Dark Ages in western Europe, the artistic tradition was kept alive, chiefly in cathedrals, castles, and monasteries (Alexander 19).

After the temple-like institutions, the next phase of museums resembled that of the philosophical academy. During this period, the museum-library emerged with the establishment of the formal university and community of scholars. In the third

century B.C., Ptolemy Soter, or the “Preserver”, founded the most famous museum of the era at Alexandria. This museum was short lived and closely associated with the university at Alexandria. Museums had transformed into institutions dedicated to research and learning.

During the fundamental changes of the geographic discoveries of the late fifteenth centuries, a “culture of curiosity” developed in which cabinets became the focus for everything new, unknown or unseen that needed to be integrated into the existing perception of the world (Prosler 28). Thus museums developed into cabinets of curiosity where information was displayed and interpreted to educate the public. Museums began to take on a new role in serving the public, moving away from the private collections and treasure troves of the societal elite. The later sixteenth century saw the basic institutionalization of the cabinet and the employment of the first curators (Prosler 29).

Museums began to go public in the late seventeenth century (Alexander 8) but acquired “its modern form during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (Bennett 19). “The modern museum is a product of Renaissance humanism, eighteenth-century enlightenment and nineteenth-century democracy” (Alexander 8).

The next major evolution in museums is the focus on education and interpretation. Museums were slow-growing in the United States, but by 1900, American museums were becoming centers of education and interpretation (Alexander 11-12).

According to museum scholar Edward Alexander, interpretation is:

an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” (195).

relies heavily on sensory perception—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and kinetic muscle sense—to enable the museum-goer emotionally to experience objects (12).

Museum professional and scholar Hilde Hein argues that “education is merging with public programming in museums, and, combining other museum functions that formerly were kept apart, teaching conflates with exhibition strategy” (5). This new focus required museums to move away from the idea of viewing objects on display and instead focused on using the five senses, learning through objects, hands-on interaction and educational programming. By the 1920s and 1930s, issues of diversity entered museology as “museums had become more interested in diverse audiences and sought to design environments better able to educate them” (Kreps 9). Museums no longer served as sterile institutions displaying objects, but became places where people could actively engage in the learning process. “Museums increasingly hold themselves accountable for delivering experiences” (Hein 5).

Children’s museums provide one example of museums as educational and interactive. They don’t always have typical “collections” that are showcased, but instead present exhibits which encourage hands-on exploration and learning as part of the experience. These interactive exhibits use bold colors, buttons, sounds, and

everyday shapes and objects to stimulate the senses and promote learning and development. Hein explains that:

Children's museums have been around for about a century and are meant to evoke certain types of experiences within their young audiences. They use things as teaching materials to encourage visitors to become active learners. Children's museums are building the next generation of museumgoers...who will approach objects pragmatically, as props meant to stimulate experience, whose function is to entertain and edify (33-34).

Children's museums lend themselves to creating an environment that combines imaginative play with learning fun (Hein 33-34).

During the middle to late twentieth century, many museums began to become community cultural centers (Alexander 215). "Where the previous educative role of museums had been invoked chiefly for the sake of conserving a culture and transmitting knowledge of it from past to future, now museums were admonished to become agents of social change rather than conservation" (Hein 99). This change has become increasingly evident with the development of the ecomuseum during the 1970s in France. "The ecomuseum was designed around and within the community in order to combine the natural and social environments, and extend the activities of the museum and the focus of its work beyond the actual museum building and into the community" (Simpson, Making Representations 71). The ecomuseum is also referred to as a community-based museum. "The establishment of museums and cultural centers by communities themselves, enables them to take full control for their heritage interpretation and provide cultural services of direct relevance to their community" (Simpson, Making Representations 69).

The United States Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s-70s focused attention on the cultural needs of ethnic communities (Simpson, Making Representations 10). This awareness “began the growth of community museums and a rethinking of the traditional museum’s role in the United States” as activists sought for community empowerment and creating a sense of cultural connectedness (Simpson, Making Representations 11). “Community-based museums often provide a broader range of activities than the traditional European model of museum, including the use of performing and visual arts as an integral part of the exhibitions, as a means of interpreting the collections, and as an activity for participation by visitors; they fulfill the role of museum and cultural center and in many cases move beyond this and deal with issues of social, political, and economic importance” (Simpson, Making Representations 75). Museums began addressing highly charged political issues of poverty, racism, repatriation, etc.

As activism and effects of the Civil Rights movement moved into the 1980s, museums in the United States were forced to deal with repatriation of Indigenous human remains and cultural property. As repatriation found a home in the legal system, the number of Indigenous museums and cultural centers created across the States steadily grew. Museums found themselves in the midst of discussions pertaining to cultural and political issues. Thus we see the museums evolving into agents of social change.

The increased demand for repatriation and the passing of NAGPRA played a major role in this shifting of museums. “NAGPRA empowers source communities to

control their own identity” (Marstine 20). NAGPRA helped bring current issues facing Indigenous peoples to the forefront of museological discourse. It has forced museums to increase their conscious awareness of how Indigenous Peoples are represented and encouraged continuing collaborations between museums and communities. Museums are becoming agents of social change as they pull away from the display of objects to discussing culture, human rights, genocide, and social consciousness. Here are a few examples. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C. publicizes its mission as:

advancing and disseminating knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of democracy (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

USHMM raises awareness about the Holocaust during World War II and appeals to our responsibilities as democratic citizens. The museum also created a learning center and the Committee on Consciousness which keeps abreast of current human right violations and genocide issues. The committee in conjunction with the museum strives to educate and raise public awareness to encourage action for social change.

Another example is the Aboriginal Living Cultural Centre in Victoria, Australia; the cultural centre “highlights the atrocities committed against Aboriginals during the colonial era. The exhibition details massive population decline resulting from disease and violence” (Simpson, Making Representations 31). Simpson further explains that “in 1971, the Museum of the City of New York and the Anacostia Museum presented exhibitions dealing with topics of social concern to urban

residents such as drug addiction and the problem of rats” (Making Representations 11).

Indigenous cultural centers and museums across North America focus on the living culture of their people. This type of presentation is an attempt to educate as a means of dispelling cultural myths and increasing cultural understanding and tolerance. These examples reveal how community museums are attempting to educate the public on contemporary issues, to increase social awareness and encourage community action for social change.

What is a Museum Today?

Museums are complex institutions that serve multiple functions and diverse audiences. The concept of a museum has changed throughout history and continues to evolve today. There are numerous definitions for what constitutes a museum, depending on the defining organization. The most relevant definition to Indigenous museums and the most widely used internationally is the International Council of Museums (ICOM) definition:

a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment (ICOM).

While this provides a general definition of museum, it is important to note that there are numerous types of museums serving different functions.

The following provide a few examples of the most well-known types of museums. The art museum is one example of a museum and probably represents the “archetype of what most people think of a museum” (Hein 19). The “early private

collectors (noblemen, royalty, etc) were the force that made the art museum possible” (Alexander 19); art museums materialized from “private collections made public in the eighteenth century” and “typically contain ‘fine art’ such as sculptures, paintings, and some ambiguously utilitarian items as religious or funerary implements, architectural components, clothing, armor and weaponry, and domestic furnishings” (Hein 19). Items considered “museum quality”ⁱⁱⁱ or a “museum piece”^{iv} should be found in museums (Hein 19). Another example is the history museum which strives to “recreate the past in an idiom accessible to the present” (Hein 31); “history museums are collecting and preserving objects of the past...to convey historical perspective” (Alexander 79). Science museums are a third type of museum and can actually be broken into three main types: natural history, science center and science and technology museums (Hein). Natural history museums are intended to “explore the world of nature and help visitors to understand humanity’s place in the world” (Alexander 41). They display specimens “removed from their real-world environment and detached from their place in the physical world” and attempt to “explain natural processes observed by scholars and researchers” (Hein 24-25). Hein describes science centers as “being relatively new to the museum field and are knowledge-centered rather than object-centered which simulate world-like experiences in the visitor through the manipulation of objects” (26). Museums of science and technology are “collection driven” (Hein 29) and “arose with the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, the advent of the world’s fairs in the nineteenth century are intended to increase recognition of man’s inventive mind while

keeping up with technology” (Alexander 63). These are merely a few examples of the types of museums that exist.

Given the nature of our multicultural world as well as the current criticisms and controversy surrounding museums, there are many perspectives to consider in defining museums of today. Indigenous populations have very different ideas of the museum concept and define this institution differently than that of non-Indigenous organizations and museum professionals. Not only is the definition of museum different, defining the concepts within the overall definition vary between cultural perspectives. Sharon Macdonald states that most of museums’ long-held assumptions and functions have been challenged over the last decade or so (1). “The truth is, we do not know any more what a museum institution is” (qtd. in S. Macdonald 1).

What is a Cultural Center?

Alexander argues that “museums that serve as cultural centers frequently not only put visual and performing arts together but also combine art, history, and science subject matter and sometimes reach a regional audience” (218). Cultural centers as seen within Indigenous communities follow the ecomuseum model. As discussed earlier, this model is a recent evolution of museums that is closely tied to museums becoming agents of social change. The ecomuseum model has distinct characteristics that distinguish it from the traditional, western museum. The ecomuseum is the essence of community, combining classical features of the museum with participation of the local community (Davis 169-170). The purpose of the ecomuseum is the empowerment of community members with regard to their heritage and culture

(Davis 174). The main features that designate an ecomuseum are 1) an integration of natural and cultural resources, social structures and economy; 2) the empowerment of residents by encouraging dialogue that ensures local views are taken into account when planning a regional vision; and 3) collaborative management between business, associations, politicians and volunteers (Davis 169). Further explanation of the characteristics of the ecomuseum framework include: community participation, decentralization of museum functions, including natural features of the community, a sense of place, passing knowledge on through observation and participation, embracing material culture and the culture that produces it, and involving the community as the keeper and interpreter of cultural materials (Rahder; Davis). Davis illustrates the ecomuseum model with the following analogy:

If the ecomuseum is thought of as a thread, it can then be perceived as the mechanism that holds together the varied elements (the pearls, or special sites) that make individual places special. Here, the pearls are element of landscape, nature, community, sites, song, traditions, and so on. This 'necklace' model helps us to understand that by combining the attributes...the ecomuseum brings together those elements that make places special (239-240).

Kreps also argues that:

The key concept behind the ecomuseum is creating awareness of the relationships among community, identity, and space. It is a bottom-up approach that places community participation and self-actualization at the core of its mission (Kreps 122).

The ecomuseum model is centered around the community framework of everything is interconnected.

The following are examples that illustrate how ecomuseums reflect

Indigenous community values. The Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC)

along the Northwest coast of Washington state represents one example. The Makah Tribe founded the MCRC in 1979 and opened its curatorial facility in 1993 within its Neah Bay, Washington community; the MCRC was founded and built as a direct result to preserve findings from an archaeological excavation of a three-hundred year old Makah community (Mauger and Bowchop 57). This facility “presents itself and functions as a modern version of a traditional longhouse; it connects with the two very important elements of Makah culture of welcoming visitors and develops and hosts cultural programs in the community” (Erikson, Ward and Wachendorf 18). Collections and exhibits are labeled using the Makah language in addition to English as a means of using and preserving their Indigenous language (Mauger and Bowchop).

The Ak-Chin Community Ecomuseum in southern Arizona provides another example of using the ecomuseum model to benefit the community. When the Ak-Chin community faced eminent cultural disruption from an archaeological excavation for the installment of an irrigation system, members grew increasingly “concerned that their culture was being undermined by outside forces” (Fuller 345). “At this time the tribal council chair began to seek ways to diffuse these tensions and reweave the community together so that younger generations would know the tribes’ early struggles and achievements” (Fuller 338). The community decided that a museum/cultural center would be the best mechanism to house artifacts recovered from the archaeological site as well as “reflecting Ak-Chin traditional values and beliefs” (Davis 185) through a “community-operated educational institution

organized around an integrated concept of culture, territory, and human creation” (Fuller 361).

In northern Australia, the Djomi Museum is a “small community-based institution” that uses “few object labels but rather contains thematic displays of photographs and artifacts to convey aspects of material culture and ceremonial life” (Simpson, Revealing and Concealing 163). Many of these “Indigenous museums and cultural centers may also highlight intangible aspects of culture through story-telling, song and recitation which are the primary methods of culturally appropriate interpretation” (Simpson, Revealing and Concealing 163). The Djomi Museum serves to “preserve and display cultural materials and art works produced by local community members” and incorporates the traditional Keeping Place as a preservation facility of museum artifacts (Simpson, Revealing and Concealing 167). Keeping Places are “community-based cultural preservation facilities” used for the “preservation of restricted ceremonial or sacred items” (Simpson, Revealing and Concealing 165); they have been used by Aboriginal Peoples since before standard museum preservation practices.

While these illustrate just a few examples, many more Indigenous communities across the globe are creating their own institutions that parallel the museum concept; however, often times the terminology may be different. “Cultural Center” is commonly used in referencing these institutions. Sometimes the name includes cultural center and museum. Using the term cultural center creates positive connotations and carries a slightly different meaning than museum. The “Center” is

the heart of something; the heart is the lifeblood of an organism, keeping it alive, active and breathing. In order to maintain life, the heart must “pump” or move to circulate the blood throughout the “body.” Therefore, a cultural center is a multi-functional, active and thriving place where the community can celebrate its culture. This is a place where the individual members can feel connected to a whole. Just as the name suggests, this “center” is intended for the benefit of the community.

These community museums may take on various forms, depending on the community, and are commonly referred to as museums and cultural centers. “For some Native people the term museum carries negative connotations and strong associations of the egregious treatment Native communities received at the hands of museums” (Cooper 9). The term also conflicts with the missions of Indigenous museums and cultural centers because their sole purpose is not to preserve objects for future generations but rather focus on preserving a thriving culture. It is important to note that not all individuals within Indigenous communities agree with the museum concept in its traditional form and in its new and evolving state. As scholar

Amareswar Galla states:

Ceremonies, festivals, events of open and restricted local and supra-local significance; preservation, continuation and management of cultural heritage in the community; the voices, values, and traditions of communities; and the (intangible) contemporary arts movement... are integral parts of a living, dynamic and adaptive heritage, and of the wider environment within which communities develop sustainable cultural systems. In short, the perspective is one of holistic preservation and continuation of all aspects of cultural life. The Indigenous heritage movement is often manifested in the forms of keeping-places, meeting houses, ceremonial houses cultural farms, community museums and cultural and interpretation centres. They are not alternatives to the existing museums. They are responses to immediate community need (Indigenous Peoples 86).

Museums are changing as a result of social demands and no longer represent the colonial concepts they once did. Perhaps a new definition in conjunction with a new perception is necessary in order to give justice to museum functions today and break away from the negative history that is associated with the term.

Indigenous cultural centers could be considered museums for social action. The mission is not to preserve some archaic culture, but to acknowledge and celebrate the culture's survival. It is a place where cultural traditions, customs, art and crafts, language, oral history, traditional education, food, values, and belief systems are thriving. Cultural centers act as havens for Indigenous youth, a place where they feel connected to their community and identity as Indigenous individuals. It promotes unity among community members, links the past with the present and future, while increasing self-empowerment and strengthening cultural traditions.

Where are museums heading?

The display of objects has been the museum's historic mission...but what is observed today in the postcolonial museum is no longer just objects; objects have been reconstituted as sites of experience, and museums increasingly hold themselves accountable for delivering experience (Hein 5). If museums are becoming sites of experience, what experiences do they account for and for whom? Do these experiences describe genocide that has plagued so many Indigenous communities? It is possible that as agents of social change, museums can shift into institutions of

social justice and healing. How would this occur? Can we determine that healing is indeed the newest phase of museums?

These questions promote critical thinking of the future of museums and the idea proposed in this thesis. Museological methods are being adopted to suit the demands of current social needs within particular cultural context (Simpson, Making Representations 107). This thesis proposes that trauma healing is an ongoing concern among Indigenous and ethnic communities, and as such there is the need within museums to meet the demands for healing. Therefore, it could be determined that this is where museums are heading. As a result, critical analysis should develop “dialogue driven museum leading to the creation of a learning environment in which memory and testimony inform and are informed by historical context and scholarship” (Simpson, Making Representations 88).

Chapter 4

As genocide museums are becoming increasingly common across the globe, one might ask, “Why is this a growing phenomenon?” Clearly, these museums serve a purpose and communities may be building them as one means to confront and remember the trauma. Genocide museums are one example of museums as agents of social change as they strive to connect the past with the present and future and educate the public about this atrocious part of human history to prevent future episodes of genocide. Often the survivors of these heinous crimes are actively involved in the design, programming and creation of these museums. They might participate as volunteers, employees, docents, and speakers. This participation may help the survivors to deal with the trauma and heal.

This thesis suggests that genocide museums can move beyond just the purpose of acting as an agent of social change. This is achieved by combining the museum as agent of social change with the ecomuseum or community cultural center model. The healing museum model starts from within as it is built directly out of the experience of the community. Its main purpose is not only to display history or culture, but to provide a safe space where the community members can discuss their experiences as a means of healing. Of course, through the healing process, the history of the trauma and culture of the people will be revealed as it is all connected to who they are, where they come from and how they heal the community on the spiritual, physical and emotional levels.

From a western perspective, history is set up on a linear time-line with a defined beginning and end. This idea sets the tone that history moves forward without intersection. From an Indigenous perspective, history comes full circle. It is a circular continuum that suggests no beginning and no end, but a cycle that continues and repeats itself. It suggests a connection between the past, present and future. This idea also reflects the Indigenous perspective of holistic connections between the people, the earth and the spirit world, a blurring of the dimensions instead of compartmentalizing and disconnecting living elements. The circular pattern that the traditional Medicine Wheel symbolizes and is reflected in Indigenous cultures should be an important element in the physical and theoretical design of a healing museum (Fixico).

The following are examples of museums that already use this element as a foundation in their philosophy and physical structure and design. The mission statement of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. is:

to advocate and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage its visitors to reflect upon moral and spiritual questions raised by the event of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

At the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the permanent exhibition begins on the top (fourth) floor and continues down to the second floor. Visitors gradually descend in a spiral through the exhibit. This design eliminates any abrupt pauses through history and allows for the information to flow and connect. It is more reflective of the continual movement of events through time.

This circular flow through history is also revealed in the design of the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum (HCCM) in Lawrence, Kansas. Haskell Indian Nations University evolved from a boarding school where children were stripped of their identity into a university for Native students that teaches from a Native perspective (Rahder). The Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is dedicated to the remembrance of the first boarding school students and telling Haskell's story of endurance and survival. The Haskell Cultural Center was designed and created as a place of healing, a place where current and former students could come and reconcile with the painful history and purpose of cultural genocide which boarding schools represented. It is built as a site of remembrance and healing where students celebrate their survival and perseverance. The entry plaza is designed as a cleansing space where each individual can release him/herself of any negative energy and feelings in preparation for entering the HCCM (Rahder). After this cleansing preparation, the visitor walks under a portico which is designed to draw the individual's attention upwards towards the sky to give thanks to the "Creator" (Rahder). This cleansing process is important to help students remember and heal from Haskell's boarding school days.

Upon entering the HCCM, the visitor walks into the exhibit, *"Honoring Our Children Through the Seasons of Sacrifice, Survival, Change and Celebration."* It is designed in a circular pattern so that the visitor moves fluidly through four seasons; this symbolizes a cycle, a continuous connection between the people and their environment (Rahder). The Cultural Center draws upon the Sacred Circle philosophy and has a marmoleum-tiled replica of Haskell's Medicine Wheel in the center of the

display area (Haskell Indian Nations University). The HCCM also has a medicinal garden which acts as a place of healing both emotional and physical pain. It contains herbs and plants that are used in smudging ceremonies as well as for medicinal purposes (Rahder). One student even designed a brochure to teach others the names and uses of each plant. In 2003, the Haskell hosted a Record Conference at which Jake Swamp, an Indigenous storyteller, planted a peace tree. This tree is symbolic of peace, remembering and coming together as one. The physical and theoretical foundations upon which the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is built come full circle with the mission of remembering and healing.

Another example includes the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. The mission of NMAI illustrates its vision of showing Native cultures as living and thriving through its commitment:

to advancing knowledge and understanding of the Native cultures of the Western Hemisphere, past, present, and future, through partnerships with Native people and others. The museum works to support the continuance of culture, traditional values, and transitions in contemporary Native life (Smithsonian Institution).

It was designed by Native architects and has a physical structure which reveals smooth, curving lines and circular patterns that suggest it was formed and weathered by natural elements (Smithsonian Institution). It is designed to show the harmony between nature and architecture that is reflective of the Native universe (Smithsonian Institution).

Finally, in Inari, Finland the main exhibit in the Saami museum Siida is designed in a two-fold circular path. The outer exhibit focuses on the environment

and its role in shaping Saami culture. This encircles the inner exhibit which focuses on the Saami cultural aspect. Both are designed within a context that directly relates to seasonal changes. The visitor continues through the inner and outer circles of the exhibit only to discover that the layout is designed to illustrate how Saami culture is directly connected with nature to reveal a continuous cycle that shifts with the seasons. The museums provide a forum where they can tell their story to the world; a place where they can share their story and validate their experience so that others can learn.

See Figure 4.1. Using Smith's model, we can put the healing museum model within a research framework. Smith places self-determination at the center, as it is a goal of social justice expressed through and across psychological, social, cultural, and economic terrains involving the processes of transformation, decolonization, healing and mobilization as peoples (116). Indigenous communities are engaged in the four directional processes as they move through the stages of survival, recovery, development and self-determination (116). The design and implementation of the healing museum engages communities in the process of healing as they move through survival, recovery and self-determination after genocide.

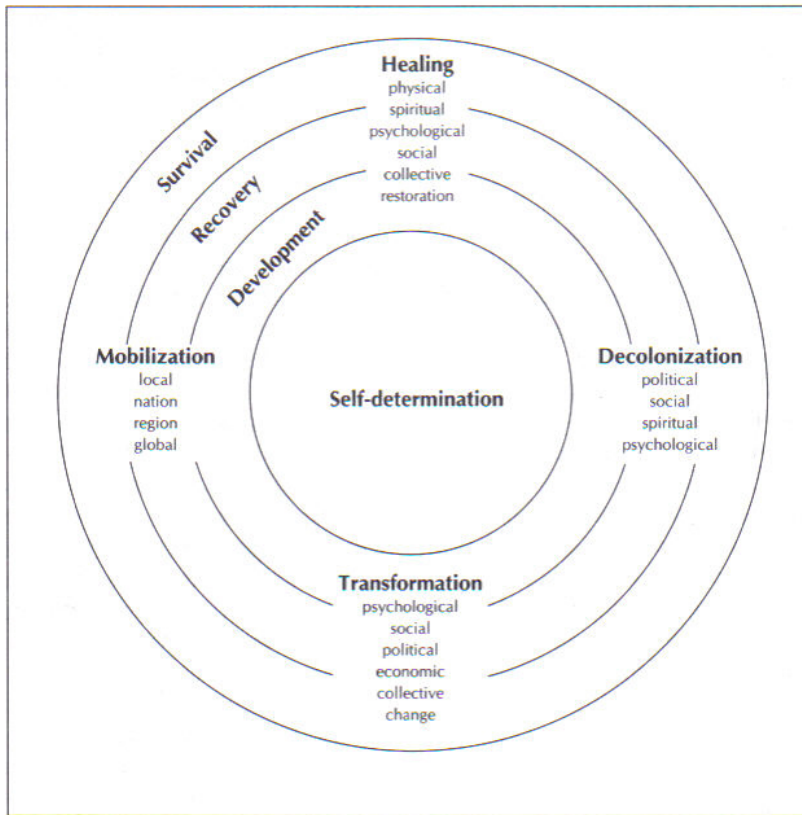


Figure 4.1 The Indigenous Research Agenda (Smith 117).

In the previous chapters, I addressed the issues of healing and genocide, oral traditions and oral history, and museums' history and roles within communities. These topics are all connected and may be used together to help Indigenous communities with the healing process. In this final chapter, I will bring the information together into a model of what a museum of healing might look like. Based on research and knowledge of museology, this chapter provides a model containing elements research indicates are instrumental in community healing; these elements should be present within a museum dedicated to healing a community and remembering the historical trauma resulting in the community's need to heal. The

major components of a healing museum are safe space, community, spiritual healing or serenity garden, voices and testimonials for remembering/oral history project within an archives, expression room, memorial or remembering the victims, and community projects.

It is important to remember that a healing museum will not look like the traditional, colonial museum but rather will mirror the ecomuseum model as it has evolved into the agent of social change. It will reflect a community cultural center with museum elements.

Theoretical Model of the Healing Museum

As stated earlier, the healing museum model is a further evolution of museums as agents of social change. Based in theory and research, the following are the components I propose a healing museum would need in order to achieve the purpose of community healing. The theoretical framework of museums as agent of social change with that of the ecomuseum model combine with healing elements to create a new museum framework. It becomes a truly interactive and educational center for the community and the general public. This model is intended to provide communities with a framework when designing their own community healing museum.

Historically, museums fit into the western, linear continuum with a distinct beginning and end. The model proposed in this chapter deviates from this idea as it is constructed to incorporate elements that work together on a circular continuum with no distinct beginning or end, thus symbolically representing Indigenous culture and

values. It neither follows a linear timeline nor the compartmentalizing structure that is so prominent in western institutions. This model does not separate history from culture and art, people from the environment or oral traditions from written texts. This model is holistic in nature. The three overarching themes of this model are *empowerment, balance and community*, all important components of self-determination and healing. This museum should serve the purpose of *empowering the community* to restore the *balance* disrupted. See Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

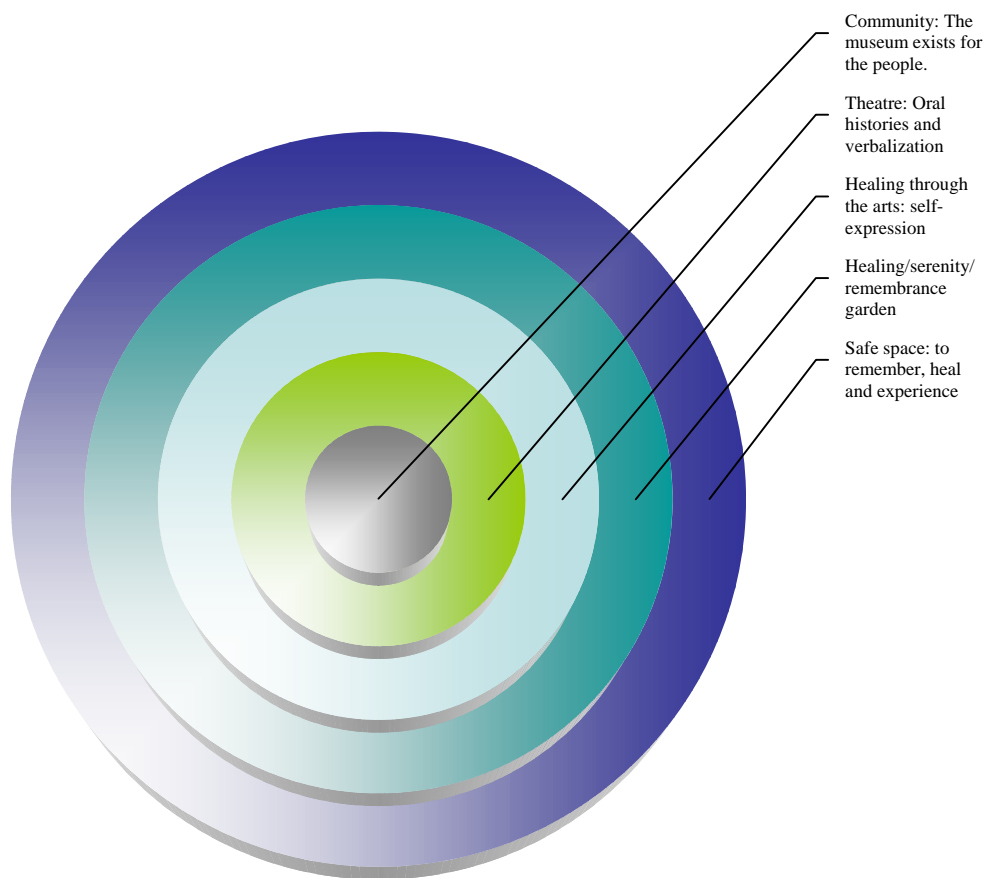


Figure 4.2. Balance, Empowerment, Connection.

Figure 4.2 shows the relationship between the components as they build upon each other to reach the next step in the cycle. It illustrates how the museum begins from within, at the heart of the community. This visual reflects the community's desire to embark on the healing process that allows this entity to exist.

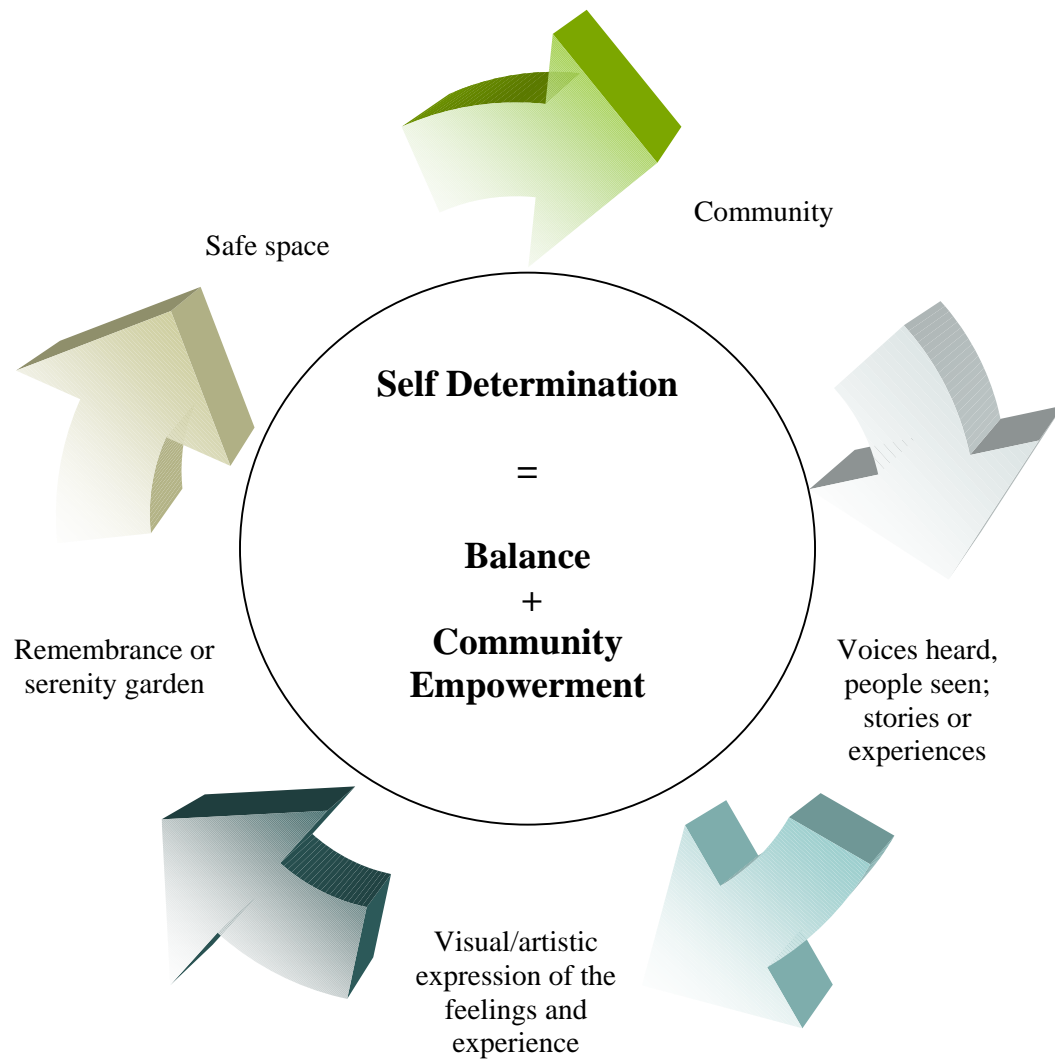


Figure 4.3. Self-Determination.

Figure 4.3 further illustrates the connection between the components of the museum. It reveals a theoretical model that does not compartmentalize its components or exist in linear terms, but rather exists based on the idea of connection and cycles. There is not true beginning and end in the cycle, but instead it is the perpetual motion through the process. The process is never complete and occurs at the individual and community levels, while transcending generations. *Balance* and *community empowerment as self-determination*; these three concepts are the heart of the process.

The main components of the healing museum model connect on multiple levels. They are part of a process; a process that cycles within individuals, through the community and across generations. The *community* comes together to connect and verbalize their individual experiences and stories (*oral narratives*) which combine to become part of the social memory or consciousness. The stories are passed down so as not to be forgotten (*remembrance*) as they are a part of those who were, are and will be. The connection reinforces the survival of culture which is expressed through the *arts* to help create visualizations of an evolving and traditional culture that now recognizes the trauma as a part of their past, present and future. The arts are kept alive through teachings as elders pass them onto to future generations. The *garden* creates the place where those who perished return to the earth, reiterating the Indigenous connection to the environment. Those who perished maintain a connection to the survivors through nature, and thus are always present and remembered. The process occurs within a *community space* where the members feel

empowered to re-establish the *balance* that was disrupted during the trauma. The cycle continues as there is no true beginning or end.

Community

The community should be the heart of any museum. As mentioned in the third chapter, museums have evolved from cabinets of curiosity to agents of social change. Today it is not acceptable for museums to maintain the mission of displaying glass cases full of objects disconnected to their cultural context. It is important that museums create an environment of life and changing culture, traditions and survival. This occurs when the community becomes the center of the museum; the focus and designers of interpretation and presentation. Those who lived the experience are the experts of the history, the consequences, the feelings, and effects on the community.

A healing museum should first and foremost locate the survivors and future generations of those who suffered the trauma. The museum's purpose is to involve the community to engage individuals in the healing process. The survivors should determine the design, location, and presentation of information. Those who experienced the trauma first hand and those who continue to experience the consequences and aftermath maintain authority over interpretation and history. It is they who know best how to design the museum for healing purposes.

Theatre for Oral Narratives

One of the catalytic factors in creating Indigenous museums is the desire to remember, to preserve the culture and language. Especially in cases of genocide, remembering is important. These museums are essential in creating a critical

consciousness. They are places where others can learn of the atrocities of humanity and force us to remember in an attempt to not repeat history. “Telling and re-telling stories from the past are necessary for the healing process” (Nytaagodien and Neal 468).

The survivors’ oral history narratives contribute to the social memory. It also creates a “real” sense of the trauma for those who experienced it and outsiders who were disconnected from the event. Allowing the survivors to share their experience acknowledges that the trauma happened, not only to individuals but to an entire community. It creates a sense of a shared experience that lends itself to the individuals feeling a “part” of the “whole” instead of a “part” in isolation. As one psychologist states, “creative barriers are released when the barriers of denial and repression are removed” (Nytagodien and Neal 468). Verbalizing the story through a truth-telling process gives validation to what happened and helps release the residual pain of the trauma (Wilson, Relieving Our Suffering 194).

The oral narratives provide multiple perspectives or multiple truths for the events that occurred. Unlike western ideology of the belief that there is one “truth” validated with “facts,” Indigenous communities recognize that there are many truths. It is the combining of all the truths that allows us to fully comprehend and understand the entire event and thus becomes part of the collective memory.

It is not a history deleted or dictated by the dominant society or perpetrators of genocide. It is a history of truth; a history of the people. An oral history project should be a critical component of a healing museum as it gives the truth in history by

the people. This project brings together the parts—the individual personal experiences—and places them into the whole experience, the trauma endured by the whole community. The oral history element of the museum includes video footage of survivors telling their stories. In addition to the video component, there may be a written plaque of their brief biography. This personalizes the experience and allows the survivors to connect with the learners or outside observers. It forces the learner to realize that this did happen, and real people with families suffered. All too often individuals are detached from such heinous crimes because 1) they didn't see or it firsthand, 2) they didn't experience or know anybody who was affected, and 3) there is the common misconception that it always happens "over there."

Any community experiencing severe trauma should participate in an oral history project. Oral history projects are a great way to engage community members and give voice to the individual and community experiences; it is a means of recording the events to be shared with the rest of the world. The stories can educate about genocide to help prevent its re-occurrence.

Healing through the arts

It is important to express feelings, especially after one has experienced something so life changing and traumatic as genocide. The trauma does not just stop with those directly affected, but it is passed on through the generations. If not expressed properly, the resulting feelings could materialize through negative and unwanted behaviors such as abuse, alcoholism, depression, suicide, and other

behaviors discussed in chapter one. These behaviors are passed down and become part of the community's cycle of oppression.

Language is a key component in Indigenous communities. Often ideas and meanings become lost in translation from the Indigenous language into western languages. The result is difficulty in verbally expressing how one feels. However, we know that words are not the only form of expression. Expressing oneself through art such as drawings, paintings, poetry, song, writing, dance, etc can provide the therapy needed to release the feelings and the negative energy that they hold captive within the individual. "Community based cultural centers and programs can reinforce a positive identity, to help to heal cultural dislocation and improve educational opportunities for children" (Simpson, Making Representations 78).

Cultural arts are an important part of Indigenous culture and an excellent means of expressing feelings within the safety of a cultural context. Creating a visual to accompany the oral narratives establishes a stronger sense of what happened and provides a clearer picture of the damages forced on the community.

Healing museums have the responsibility to share these community and individual experiences. They are not meant to act as institutions that simply display the belongings of those who perished and survived or the articles that were recovered from the war site.^v Creating a space that merely exhibits the objects does not address healing but rather educates on the things that were used or found during the time of the trauma. The articles are connected with the victims but provide no means of dealing with the trauma in order to move on. Therefore, providing other outlets such

as art expression and cultural performance creates a living experience; the community can recognize that yes the trauma happened, but in spite of that, the community and its culture have survived and continue to thrive.

Space

Two critical components of healing are trust and safety. Survivors of genocide have been violated, stripped of identity and cultural connection. It is not uncommon for these communities to lose trust in humanity and those around them. This loss of trust can create a feeling of vulnerability, powerlessness and no sense of safety. The first thing to consider in a healing museum is the space—both the physical and emotional/spiritual space provided to the community. It is important that this space is safe, a place where individuals may go to confront the trauma they have so violently endured.

This space provides a cultural haven, where the individuals may connect as a community, as a whole that has a common experience and pain. This will help to reconnect them to the community and their culture, thus reestablishing a sense of identity. Genocide causes a sense of identity loss, so this reconnecting will help to reestablish a sense of identity by placing the individual within the context of a whole.

One way of creating a safe space is allowing the community to create, design, and build the institution for the community. The survivors should have the biggest involvement in designing the museum. It should reflect the culture, past and present and how this event fits into the changing survival of the people. Following the

ecomuseum holistic model can help to achieve the sense of community empowerment for the healing and survival of the people.

Remembrance/Serenity Garden

As previously stated remembrance is an important part of healing. Therefore a remembrance or serenity garden/memorial space is one method of symbolically remembering the trauma and the community lives it took. “When the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum opened in Washington D.C. in 1993, the memorial space was designed to allow people to light candles, and the Dali Lama, who was the first visitor to enter the museum, immediately created ritual there” (Gurian 92).

Nature is part of the natural cycle. We come from nature and return to nature. It is part of the holistic model that Indigenous culture and beliefs are based on. A garden provides a peaceful and calming atmosphere where survivors can remember those who perished. For example, the Holocaust Museum in Houston, Texas, maintains a hope garden where the child victims are remembered. Visitors are instructed to take a rock from a selected source and place on the memorial stone in the garden. Each rock represents one child who perished. This is a way to involve visitors and remember those who suffered. The same concept could apply to the healing museum. The garden simply provides a space where community members can come to give offerings in remembrance of the victims. This idea is intended to combine the elements of remembrance and space.

The garden is envisioned to circle the entire healing museum. It is not simply a designated space, but rather an entire area that moves along the perimeter of the

building. It does not simply act as a space for remembering, but will also serve the purpose of cleansing. Museums focused on genocide require a delicate balance of body, spirit and mind for the survivors, workers within the museum, and visitors. It is important to cleanse oneself of ill thoughts and negative energy before entering such a space. A healing museum is about healing the body, spirit, and mind. Participating in a cleansing ceremony before entering the facility is one part of the healing process. The serenity garden provides the perfect space where one can clear his/her mind and prepare physically and spiritually his/her being.

Water is the source of life. A moving water element should be placed in the garden. This could be in the form of a waterfall or moving creek just to give a couple of examples. The water needs to be moving as a representation of survival and life continuity. It gives the sense of something alive and changing as opposed to something stagnant and unchanging. Water is also a cleansing element, and can be used as such in the serenity garden.

The purpose of this museum is to engage the community in a dialogue where it will remember and pass on the history to future generations. Remembering is necessary in order to overcome the oppressive nature of genocide. If people forget, then genocide is accomplished. Genocide is the intentional and total destruction as a means to forget the existence of a culture, a people. If genocide is one-hundred percent successful and then we forget it occurred, then the genocidal perpetrators prevail; accomplishing the purpose of erasing the social memory and existence of a culture. The museum is for the survivors, but also a place to educate others. While

history does repeat itself, the rapid growth of genocide/healing museums raises awareness to decrease the probability of genocide occurring today and tomorrow.

It is important to remember that this museum should model the ecomuseum. It is a part of a living community and should reflect the dynamic and vibrant nature of the people. Therefore, some components of the museum are not necessarily a part of the “immobile structure” but rather projects that are integral parts and reflect the survival and continued strength of the community.

Genocide museum can serve multiple purposes, depending on the perspective from which it was created and the audience. For the purposes of this paper, I propose that the most important purpose of the healing museums as a growth from genocide museums is to help communities heal. They can provide a safe space where survivors may tell their story, establish a memorial for those who lost their lives to remember the ancestors who came before, but also a living entity of forgiveness and healing.

Conclusion

Increased research in intergenerational trauma, genocide and human rights violations suggests that there is a serious need to address the issues on multiple levels and in several academic arenas. The museum is one arena where these issues are discussed. As museums continue to evolve into agents of social change, I firmly believe that the construction of genocide museums into healing museums could be the next evolutionary stage in the process. I propose that the following model could be used as a model for a community that desires building a museum to address trauma healing. This model includes the critical elements necessary to engage the community in the healing process based on research in the previous chapters. This is a general model that should be tailored to meet the needs of the specific community adopting the design.

Oral narratives or testimonies are part of the healing process. Oral traditions and oral histories are a major part of Indigenous culture. This thesis explores elements of Indigenous community values and the healing process as they can relate to a genocide museum. I incorporate this research to construct a model of what a genocide museum could be like if its mission is to promote community healing and celebrate survival and cultural perseverance.

This thesis simply provides an idea, a model as the next potential evolutionary phase of museums beyond acting as agents of social change. This thesis does not determine whether or not genocide museums promote healing or whether the model museum actually engages the community members in the healing process. In order to

make these conclusions, further research must be conducted. To expand further on this project, extensive interviews with genocide survivors across the globe must be conducted to determine what the survivors' perspectives and feelings are and the purpose of genocide museums. The museum's influences on their lives and the healing process should be examined and compared to others within the community and to those with similar experiences.

Plan for Future Research

This project is complex and extensive. Even on this small scale, it involves bringing together multiple disciplines to gain an understanding of something that may or may not exist. I feel that the model presented in the final chapter provides a model for Indigenous museums. The process has already begun and Indigenous communities, academics, and museum professionals must conduct further research to get at the heart of the issue.

The first step in exploring genocide and healing museums further is to take a survey of all the genocide museums that exist in the world. The information collected should include: location, date erected/opened, survivor involvement, mission and purpose, and target audience. After the survey is complete, an extensive interviewing process with museum staff, community members and survivors should take place. Because healing is an ever-changing process, it is up to the community to define healing and how it can occur within that particular community.

While one can never anticipate the occurrence of genocide, it would be beneficial to perform a pilot study of a community from before the occurrence of genocide to

the completion of a museum using the healing museum model to help determine if in fact it can become a part of the community's healing process. One question to consider is "how can we measure healing?" Is this even possible? The subjective nature of healing probably makes it impossible to determine whether or not healing occurs from a standard research perspective. The only way to measure healing would be to measure it using a cultural framework pre-determined by the community itself.

Genocide crosses international borders and affects the globe. It is an act that has touched groups of people on each and every continent. It affected cultural groups in the past and continues to affect various communities and cultures. This project could be approached from a regional or global perspective.

Museums are rapidly evolving into new forms no longer representing the old, traditional model of cabinets of curiosities. The new forms serve many more purposes than just representing history through the exhibition of objects. Within Indigenous communities, museums are becoming living institutions where the community life-ways and culture thrive. From this perspective, museums serve as a community center for cultural revitalization and continuation. However, the evolution of museums does not stop here. They are continuing to evolve and change to fulfill multiple purposes.

Especially in the past two decades, we see the steady growth of genocide museums and museums of consciousness. Genocide museums are typically started by the survivors of the genocide, most often which is an Indigenous group or ethnic minority.

Through my graduate school research, I noticed the growing trend of creating genocide museums and the continued discussions of intergenerational trauma resulting from genocide. With a peaked interest in the topics, I wanted to explore the possibility of a connection between the two. This thesis is in no way conclusive, but serves merely to suggest that these genocide museums which strongly resemble community and cultural centers could be instrumental in the healing process of these communities. Museums such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Haskell Cultural Center and Museum, National Museum of the American Indian, and Finland Museum are examples of how museums can reach beyond the traditional boundaries of museums and touch the victimized communities in such a way that could help with the community healing process.

This thesis only touches on the possibility of museums acting as healing institutions for communities that have suffered genocide. To expand upon this project, one would need to seek out genocide survivors who have been instrumental in establishing genocide museums and participate in an extensive interview project. There are many examples of genocide in history. The sad and unfortunate truth is that many of these occurred within the last half of the twentieth century, so recent that they are still fresh in the minds of many communities and societies as a whole.

Museums/cultural centers can act as spaces for community healing. By designing these spaces using a framework that reflects the cultural values of the particular community, they will provide the safe space necessary for the individuals of a community to implement the necessary components of healing in order to

transcend the trauma. The spaces create a physical, tangible place where survivors can share their stories, acknowledge the trauma and continue to educate and remember their cultural history. As the need for healing is an ever-growing phenomenon within Indigenous communities, this healing museum model can provide one mechanism through which communities successfully engage in the healing process.

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Endnotes

ⁱ The international legal definition of genocide is found in Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

ⁱⁱ “The Lakota Takini Network is a native non-profit collective of traditionalists, helping professionals and service providers and is recognized for its research in historic trauma”(Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski i).

ⁱⁱⁱ This terminology refers to the rarity, excellence and value of an item (Hein 19).

^{iv} This term denotes something old, unique and venerable (Hein 19).

^v I use the term war because genocide is a type of war. Genocide is a brutal and violent attack on people and it can be stated that the site of occurrence is indeed a war site.